

STANDARD ON ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

New Delhi, October 31, 1952

The Indian Standards Institution has issued the 'Indian Standard Practice for Alphabetical Arrangement'—a standard of importance not only to documentalists, bibliographers and librarians, but also to users and producers of bibliographies, catalogues, indexes to books, directories, such as telephone directories and lists of a similar nature.

Alphabetical arrangement means arrangement of letters or their combinations according to the traditional values of letters which increase as we proceed from the first to the last letter of the alphabet. While usage fixes a unique arrangement among the letters of an alphabet, groups of letters with different spacings, punctuations and other marks, and the introduction of alien characters, which cannot be avoided in any collection of entries, give rise to the possibility of several alternative arrangements. This calls for standardization of alphabetical arrangement of entries.

The basis for alphabetical arrangement prescribed by the standard is all-through alphabetization, which ignores the presence of space, punctuation marks, apostrophies, brackets, etc, and also differences in the style of writing letters including capital and small letters. In one of the examples given in the standard to illustrate the rules, the terms 'Electrode-holder', 'Electrode, Metal', 'Electro-deposits', 'Electrodes' and 'Electrode (wire)', have been arranged in this order. The rule for numerals is that they shall precede letters of the alphabet. Thus the entries '6 books', '8 books', '100 books' shall be in this order. The unhelpful order to which the writing of numbers in letters instead of figures leads is illustrated by the example in the entries 'eight books', 'five books', 'one hundred book', 'seven books', 'six books', would appear in this order since the basis is all-through alphabetization.

Symbols, by which is meant non-alphabetical, non-numeral, internationally accepted characters, marks and signs, have been prescribed to precede numerals just as the latter are to precede letters of the alphabet. Mathematical symbols have been listed in an appendix according to the proposed order of arrangement for them. The standard prescribes that entries in different alphabets shall be arranged in separate sequences, and the letters of the Greek and Devnagri alphabets are listed in two separate appendices. Colon classification has been specified as the basis for the relative precedence between sets of symbols in different subjects as well as between alphabets of different languages.

The standard is available on sale for Rs. 1/8/- per copy, and may be obtained from the Secretary (Administration), Indian Standards Institution, 19 University Road, Civil Lines, Delhi-8.